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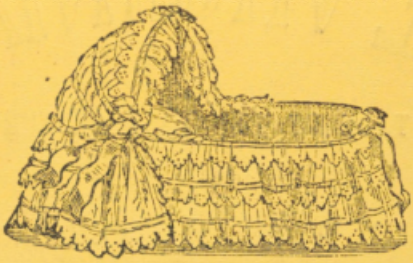

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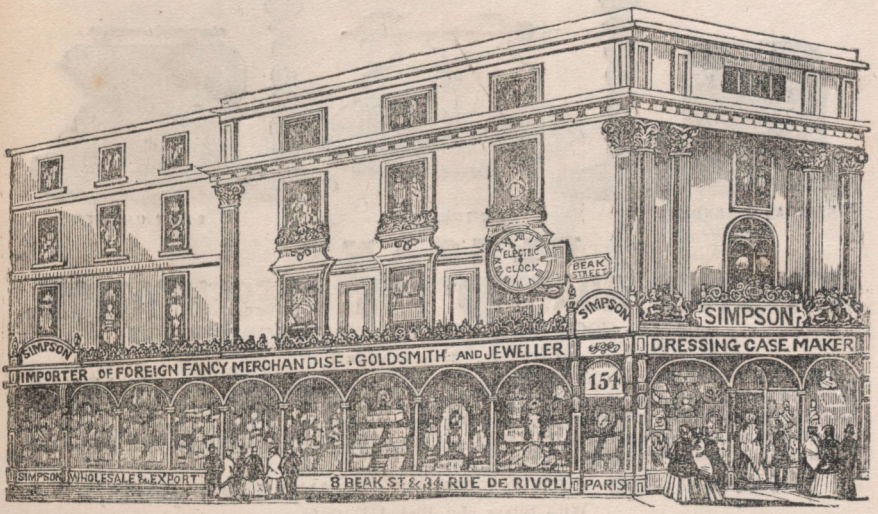

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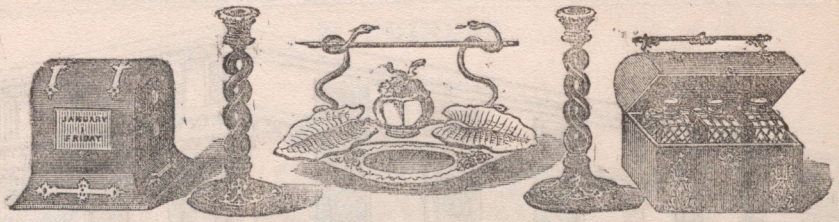

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CHAPTER XVII.

ON THE SCENT.

YOUNG Harry Warrington's act of revolt came so suddenly upon Madame de Bernstein, that she had no other way of replying to it, than by the prompt outbreak of anger with which we left her in the last chapter. She darted two fierce glances at Lady Fanny and her mother as she quitted the room. Lady Maria over her tambour frame escaped without the least notice, and scarcely lifted up her head from her embroidery, to watch the aunt retreating, or the looks which mamma-in-law and sister threw at one another.

"So, in spite of all, you *have*, madam?" the maternal looks seemed to say.

"Have what?" asked Lady Fanny's eyes. But what good in looking innocent? She looked puzzled. She did not look one-tenth part as innocent as Maria. Had she been guilty, she would have looked not guilty much more cleverly; and would have taken care to study and

compose a face so as to be ready to suit the plea. Whatever was the expression of Fanny's eyes, mamma glared on her as if she would have liked to tear them out.

But Lady Castlewood could not operate upon the said eyes then and there, like the barbarous monsters in the stage-direction in King Lear. When her ladyship was going to tear out her daughter's eyes, she would retire smiling, with an arm round her dear child's waist, and then gouge her in private.

"So you don't fancy going with the old lady to Tunbridge Wells?" was all she said to Cousin Warrington, wearing at the same time a perfectly well-bred simper on her face.

"And small blame to our cousin!" interposed my lord. (The face over the tambour-frame looked up for one instant.) "A young fellow must not have it all idling and holiday. Let him mix up something useful with his pleasures, and go to the fiddles and pump-rooms at Tunbridge or the Bath later. Mr. Warrington has to conduct a great estate in America: let him see how ours in England are carried on. Will hath shown him the kennel and the stables; and the games in vogue, which I think, cousin, you seem to play as well as your teachers. After harvest we will show him a little English fowling and shooting: in winter we will take him out a-hunting. Though there has been a coolness between us and our aunt-kinswoman in Virginia, yet we are of the same blood. Ere we send our cousin back to his mother, let us show him what an English gentleman's life at home is. I should like to read with him as well as sport with him, and that is why I have been pressing him of late to stay and bear me company."

My lord spoke with such perfect frankness that his mother-in-law and half-brother and sister could not help wondering what his meaning could be. The three last-named persons often held little conspiracies together, and caballed or grumbled against the head of the house. When he adopted that frank tone, there was no fathoming his meaning: often it would not be discovered until months had passed. He did not say "This is true," but, "I mean that this statement should be accepted and believed in my family." It was then a thing *convenue*, that my Lord Castlewood had a laudable desire to cultivate the domestic affections, and to educate, amuse, and improve his young relative; and that he had taken a great fancy to the lad, and wished that Harry should stay for some time near his lordship.

"What is Castlewood's game now?" asked William of his mother and sister as they disappeared into the corridors. "Stop! By George I have it!"

"What, William?"

"He intends to get him to play, and to win the Virginia estate back from him. That's what it is!"

"But the lad has not got the Virginia estate to pay, if he loses," remarks mamma.

"If my brother has not some scheme in view, may I be ——."

"Hush! Of course he has a scheme in view. But what is it?"

"He can't mean Maria—Maria is as old as Harry's mother," muses Mr. William.

"Pooh! with her old face and sandy hair and freckled skin! Impossible!" cries Lady Fanny, with somewhat of a sigh.

"Of course, your ladyship had a fancy for the Iroquois, too!" cried mamma.

"I trust I know my station and duty better, madam! If I had liked him, that is no reason why I should marry him. Your ladyship hath taught me as much as that."

"My Lady Fanny!"

"I am sure you married our papa without liking him. You have told me so a thousand times!"

"And if you did not love our father before marriage, you certainly did not fall in love with him afterwards," broke in Mr. William, with a laugh. "Fan and I remember how our honoured parents used to fight. Don't us, Fan? And our brother Esmond kept the peace."

"Don't recall those dreadful low scenes, William!" cries mamma. "When your father took too much drink, he was like a madman; and his conduct should be a warning to you, sir, who are fond of the same horrid practice."

"I am sure, madam, *you* were not much the happier for marrying the man you did not like, and your ladyship's title hath brought very little along with it," whimpered out Lady Fanny. "What is the use of a coronet with the jointure of a tradesman's wife?—how many of them are richer than we are? There is come lately to live in our Square, at Kensington, a grocer's widow from London Bridge, whose daughters have three gowns where I have one; and who, though they are waited on but by a man and a couple of maids, I know eat and drink a thousand times better than we do with our scraps of cold meat on our plate, and our great flaunting, trapesing, impudent, lazy lacqueys!"

"He! he! glad I dine at the palace, and not at home!" said Mr. Will. (Mr. Will, through his aunt's interest with Count Puffendorff, Groom of the Royal (and Serene Electoral) Powder-Closet, had one of the many small places at Court, that of Deputy Powder.)

"Why should I not be happy without any title except my own?" continued Lady Frances. "Many people are. I dare say they are even happy in America."

"Yes! with a mother-in-law who is a perfect Turk and Tartar, for all I hear—with Indian war-whoops howling all round you: and with a danger of losing your scalp, or of being eat up by a wild beast every time you went to church."

"I wouldn't go to church," said Lady Fanny.

"You'd go with any body who asked you, Fan!" roared out Mr. Will: "and so would old Maria, and so would any woman, that's the fact:" and Will laughed at his own wit.

"Pray, good folks, what is all your merriment about?" here asked Madame Bernstein, peeping in on her relatives from the tapestried door which led into the gallery where their conversation was held.

Will told her that his mother and sister had been having a fight (which was not a novelty, as Madame Bernstein knew), because Fanny wanted to marry their cousin, the wild Indian, and my lady countess would not let her. Fanny protested against this statement. Since the very first day when her mother had told her not to speak to the young gentleman, she had scarcely exchanged two words with him. She knew her station better. *She* did not want to be scalped by wild Indians, or eat up by bears.

Madame de Bernstein looked puzzled. "If he is not staying for you, for whom is he staying?" she asked. "At the houses to which he has been carried, you have taken care not to show him a woman that is not a fright or in the nursery; and I think the boy is too proud to fall in love with a dairymaid, Will."

"Humph! That is a matter of taste, ma'am," says Mr. William, with a shrug of his shoulders.

"Of Mr. William Esmond's taste, as you say; but not of yonder boy's. The Esmonds of his grandfather's nurture, sir, would not go a-courting in the kitchen."

"Well, ma'am, every man to his taste, I say again. A fellow might go farther and fare worse than my brother's servants'-hall, and, besides, Fan, there's only the maids or old Maria to choose from."

"Maria! Impossible!" And yet, as she spoke the very words, a sudden thought crossed Madame Bernstein's mind, that this elderly Calypso might have captivated her young Telemachus. She called to mind half-a-dozen instances in her own experience of young men who had been infatuated by old women. She remembered how frequent Harry Warrington's absences had been of late—absences which she attributed to his love for field-sports. She remembered how often, when he was absent, Maria Esmond was away too. Walks in cool avenues, whisperings in garden temples, or behind clipt hedges, casual squeezes of the hand in twilight corridors, or sweet glances and ogles in meetings on the stairs,—a lively fancy, an intimate knowledge of the world, very likely a considerable personal experience in early days, suggested all these possibilities and chances to Madame de Bernstein, just as she was saying that they were impossible.

"Impossible, ma'am! I don't know," Will continued. "My mother warned Fan off him."

"O, your mother *did* warn Fanny off?"

"Certainly, my dear baroness!"

"Didn't she? Didn't she pinch Fanny's arm black and blue? Didn't they fight about it?"

"Nonsense, William! For shame, William!" cry both the implicated ladies in a breath.

"And now, since we have heard how rich he is, perhaps it is sour grapes, that is all. And now, since he is warned off the young bird, perhaps he is hunting the old one, that's all. Impossible! why impossible? You know old Lady Suffolk, ma'am?"

"William, how can you speak about Lady Suffolk to your aunt?"

A grin passed over the countenance of the young gentleman. "Because Lady Suffolk was a special favourite at Court? Well, other folks have succeeded her."

"Sir!" cries Madame de Bernstein, who may have had her reasons to take offence.

"So they have, I say; or who, pray, is my Lady Yarmouth now! And didn't old Lady Suffolk go and fall in love with George Berkeley, and marry him when she was ever so old? Nay, ma'am, if I remember right—and we hear a deal of town-talk at our table—Harry Estridge went mad about your ladyship when you were somewhat rising twenty; and would have changed your name a third time if you would but have let him."

This allusion to an adventure of her own later days, which was, indeed, pretty notorious to all the world, did not anger Madame de Bernstein, like Will's former hint about his aunt having been a favourite at George the Second's Court; but, on the contrary, set her in good humour.

"*Au fait*," she said, musing, as she played a pretty little hand on the table, and no doubt thinking about mad young Harry Estridge; "'tis not impossible, William, that old folks and young folks, too, should play the fool."

"But I can't understand a young fellow being in love with Maria," continued Mr. William, "however he might be with *you*, ma'am. That's *oter shose*, as our French tutor used to say. You remember the Count, ma'am; he, he!—and so does Maria!"

"William!"

"And I dare say the Count remembers the bastinado Castlewood had given to him. A confounded French dancing-master calling himself a count, and daring to fall in love in our family! Whenever I want to make myself uncommonly agreeable to old Maria, I just say a few words of *parly voo* to her. *She* knows what I mean."

"Have you abused her to your cousin, Harry Warrington?" asked Madame de Bernstein.

"Well—I know she is always abusing me—and I *have* said my mind about her," said Will.

"O you idiot!" cried the old lady. "Who but a gaby ever spoke ill of a woman to her sweetheart? He will tell her everything, and they both will hate you."

"The very thing, ma'am!" cried Will, bursting into a great laugh. "I had a sort of a suspicion, you see, and two days ago, as we were riding together, I told Harry Warrington a bit of my mind about Maria;—why shouldn't I, I say? She is always abusing me, ain't

she, Fan? And your favourite turned as red as my plush waistcoat—wondered how a gentleman could malign his own flesh and blood, and, trembling all over with rage, said I was no true Esmond."

"Why didn't you chastise him, sir, as my lord did the dancing-master?" cried Lady Castlewood.

"Well, mother,—you see that at quarter-staff there's two sticks used," replied Mr. William; "and my opinion is, that Harry Warrington can guard his own head uncommonly well. Perhaps that is one of the reasons why I did not offer to treat my cousin to a caning. And now you say so, ma'am, I know he has told Maria. She has been looking battle, murder, and sudden death at me ever since. All which shows—" and here he turned to his aunt.

"All which shows what?"

"That I think we are on the right scent; and that we've found Maria—the old fox!" And the ingenuous youth here clapped his hand to his mouth, and gave a loud halloo.

How far had this pretty intrigue gone? now was the question. Mr. Will said, that at her age, Maria would be for conducting matters as rapidly as possible, not having much time to lose. There was not a great deal of love lost between Will and his half-sister.

"Who would sift the matter to the bottom? Scolding one party or the other was of no avail. Threats only served to aggravate people in such cases. I never was in danger but once, young people," said Madame de Bernstein, "and I think that was because my poor mother contradicted me. If this boy is like others of his family, the more we oppose him, the more *entêté* he will be; and we shall never get him out of his scrape."

"Faith, ma'am, suppose we leave him in it?" grumbled Will. "Old Maria and I don't love each other too much, I grant you; but an English Earl's daughter is good enough for an American tobacco-planter, when all is said and done."

Here his mother and sister broke out. They would not hear of such a union. To which Will answered, "You are like the dog in the manger. You don't wan't the man yourself, Fanny—"

"*I* want him, indeed!" cries Lady Fanny, with a toss of her head.

"Then why grudge him to Maria? I think Castlewood wants her to have him."

"Why grudge him to Maria, sir?" cried Madame de Bernstein, with great energy. "Do you remember who the poor boy is, and what your house owes to his family? His grandfather was the best friend your father ever had, and gave up this estate, this title, this very castle, in which you are conspiring against the friendless Virginian lad, that you and yours might profit by it. And the reward for all this kindness is, that you all but shut the door on the child when he knocks at it, and talk of marrying him to a silly elderly creature who might be his mother! He *shan't* marry her."

"The very thing we were saying and thinking, my dear Baroness!"

interposes Lady Castlewood. "*Our* part of the family is not eager about the match, though my lord and Maria may be."

"You would like him for yourself, now that you hear he is rich—and may be richer, young people, mind you that," cried Madam Beatrix, turning upon the other women.

"Mr. Warrington may be ever so rich, madam, but there is no need why your ladyship should perpetually remind us that we are poor," broke in Lady Castlewood, with some spirit. "At least there is very little disparity in Fanny's age and Mr. Harry's; and you surely will be the last to say that a lady of our name and family is not good enough for any gentleman born in Virginia or elsewhere."

"Let Fanny take an English gentleman, countess, not an American. With such a name and such a mother to help her, and with all her good looks and accomplishments, sure, she can't fail of finding a man worthy of her. But from what I know about the daughters of this house, and what I imagine about our young cousin, I am certain that no happy match could be made between them."

"*What* does my aunt know about me?" asked Lady Fanny, turning very red.

"Only your temper, my dear. You don't suppose that I believe all the tittle-tattle and scandal which one cannot help hearing in town? But the temper and early education are sufficient. Only fancy one of you condemned to leave St. James's and the Mall, and live in a plantation surrounded by savages! You would die of ennui, or worry your husband's life out with your ill-humour. You are born, ladies, to ornament courts—not wigwams. Let this lad go back to his wilderness with a wife who is suited to him."

The other two ladies declared in a breath that, for their parts, they desired no better, and, after a few more words, went on their way, while Madame de Bernstein, lifting up her tapestried door, retired into her own chamber. She saw all the scheme now; she admired the ways of women, calling a score of little circumstances back to mind. She wondered at her own blindness during the last few days, and that she should not have perceived the rise and progress of this queer little intrigue. How far had it gone? was now the question. Was Harry's passion of the serious and tragical sort, or a mere fire of straw which a day or two would burn out? How deeply was he committed? She dreaded the strength of Harry's passion, and the weakness of Maria's. A woman of her age is so desperate, Madame Bernstein may have thought, that she will make any efforts to secure a lover. Scandal, bah! She will retire and be a princess in Virginia, and leave the folks in England to talk as much scandal as they choose.

Is there always, then, one thing which women do not tell to one another, and about which they agree to deceive each other? Does the concealment arise from deceit or modesty? A man, as soon as he feels an inclination for one of the other sex, seeks for a friend of his own to whom he may impart the delightful intelligence. A

woman (with more or less skill) buries her secret away from her kind. For days and weeks past, had not this old Maria made fools of the whole house,—Maria, the butt of the family?

I forbear to go into too curious inquiries regarding the Lady Maria's antecedents. I have my own opinion about Madame Bernstein's. A hundred years ago, people of the great world were not so strait-laced as they are now, when everybody is good, pure, moral, modest; when there is no skeleton in anybody's closet; when there is no scheming; no slurring over of old stories; when no girl tries to sell herself for wealth, and no mother abets her. Suppose my Lady Maria tries to make her little game, wherein is her ladyship's great eccentricity?

On these points no doubt the Baroness de Bernstein thought, as she communed with herself in her private apartment.

CHAPTER XVIII.

AN OLD STORY.

S my Lady Castlewood and her son and daughter passed through one door of the saloon where they had all been seated, my lord Castlewood departed by another issue; and then the demure eyes looked up from the tambour-frame on which they had persisted hitherto in examining the innocent violets and jonquils. The eyes looked up at Harry Warrington, who stood at an ancestral portrait under the great fire-place. He had gathered a great heap of blushes, (those flowers which bloom so rarely after gentlefolks' spring-time;) and with them ornamented his honest countenance, his cheeks, his forehead, nay, his youthful ears.

"Why did you refuse to go with our aunt, cousin?" asked the lady of the tambour-frame.

"Because your ladyship bade me stay," answered the lad.

"*I* bid you stay! La! child! What one says in fun, you take in earnest! Are all you Virginian gentlemen so obsequious as to fancy every idle word a lady says is a command? Virginia must be a pleasant country for our sex if it be so!"

"You said—when—when we walked in the terrace two nights since,—O heaven!" cried Harry, with a voice trembling with emotion.

"Ah, that sweet night, cousin!" cries the Tambour-frame.

"Whe—whe—when you gave me this rose from your own neck—" roared out Harry, pulling suddenly a crumpled and decayed vegetable from his waistcoat—"which I will never part with—with, no, by heavens, whilst this heart continues to beat! You said, 'Harry, if your aunt asks

you to go away, you will go, and if you go, you will forget me.'—*Didn't* you say so?"

"All men forget!" said the Virgin, with a sigh.

"In this cold selfish country they may, cousin, not in ours," continues Harry, yet in the same state of exultation—"I had rather have lost an arm almost than refused the old lady. I tell you it went to my heart to say no to her, and she so kind to me, and who had been the means of introducing me to—to—O heaven!" . . . (Here a kick to an intervening spaniel, which flies yelping from before the fire, and a rapid advance on the tambour-frame.) "Look here, cousin! If you were to bid me jump out of yonder window, I should do it; or murder, I should do it."

"La! but you need not squeeze one's hand so, you silly child!" remarks Maria.

"I can't help it—we are so in the South. Where my heart is, I can't help speaking my mind out, cousin—and *you* know where that heart is! Ever since that evening—that—O heaven! I tell you I have hardly slept since—I want to do something—to distinguish myself—to be ever so great. I wish there was Giants, Maria, as I have read of in—in books, that I could go and fight 'em. I wish you was in distress, that I might help you, somehow. I wish you wanted my blood, that I might spend every drop of it for you. And when you told me not to go with Madame Bernstein . . ."

"*I* tell thee, child? never."

"I thought you told me. You said you knew I preferred my aunt to my cousin, and I said then what I say now, 'Incomparable Maria! I prefer thee to all the women in the world and all the angels in Paradise—and I would go anywhere, were it to dungeons, if you ordered me!' And do you think I would not stay anywhere, when you only desired that I should be near you?" he added, after a moment's pause.

"Men always talk in that way—that is,—that is, I have heard so," said the spinster, correcting herself; "for what should a country-bred woman know about you creatures? When you are near us, they say you are all raptures and flames and promises and I don't know what; when you are away, you forget all about us."

"But I think I never want to go away as long as I live," groaned out the young man. "I have tired of many things; not books and that, I never cared for study much, but games and sports which I used to be fond of when I was a boy. Before I saw you, it was to be a soldier I most desired; I tore my hair with rage when my poor dear brother went away instead of me on that expedition in which we lost him. But now, I only care for one thing in the world, and you know what that is."

"You silly child! don't you know I am almost old enough to be . . . . ?"

"I know—I know! but what is that to me? Hasn't your br . . . . —well, never mind who, some of 'em—told me stories against you, and

didn't they show me the Family Bible, where all your names are down, and the dates of your birth?"

"The cowards! Who did that?" cried out Lady Maria. "Dear Harry, tell me who did that? Was it my mother-in-law, the grasping, odious, abandoned, brazen harpy? Do you know all about her? How she married my father in his cups—the horrid hussey!—and . . . ."

"Indeed it wasn't Lady Castlewood," interposed the wondering Harry.

"Then it was my aunt," continued the infuriate lady. "A pretty moralist, indeed! A Bishop's widow, forsooth, and I should like to know whose widow before and afterwards. Why, Harry, she intrigued with the Pretender, and with the Court of Hanover, and, I daresay, would with the Court of Rome and the Sultan of Turkey if she had had the means. Do you know who her second husband was? A creature who . . . ."

"But our aunt never spoke a word against you," broke in Harry, more and more amazed at the nymph's vehemence.

She checked her anger. In the inquisitive countenance opposite to her she thought she read some alarm as to the temper which she was exhibiting.

"Well, well! I am a fool," she said. "I want thee to think well of me, Harry!"

A hand is somehow put out and seized and, no doubt, kissed by the rapturous youth. "Angel!" he cries, looking into her face with his eager, honest eyes.

Two fish-pools irradiated by a pair of stars would not kindle to greater warmth than did those elderly orbs into which Harry poured his gaze. Nevertheless, he plunged into their blue depths, and fancied he saw heaven in their calm brightness. So that silly dog (of whom Æsop or the Spelling-book used to tell us in youth) beheld a beef-bone in the pond, and snapped it, and lost the beef-bone he was carrying. O, absurd cur! He saw the beef-bone in his own mouth reflected in the treacherous pool, which dimpled, I daresay, with ever so many smiles, coolly sucked up the meat, and returned to its usual placidity. Ah! what a heap of wreck lie beneath some of those quiet surfaces! What treasures we have dropped into them! What chased golden dishes, what precious jewels of love, what bones after bones, and sweetest heart's flesh! Do not some *very* faithful and unlucky dogs jump in bodily, when they are swallowed up heads and tails entirely? When some women come to be *dragged*, it is a marvel what will be found in the depths of them. *Cavete, canes!* Have a care how ye lap that water. What do they want with us, the mischievous syren sluts? A green-eyed Naiad never rests until she has inveigled a fellow under the water; she sings after him, she dances after him; she winds round him, glittering tortuously; she warbles and whispers dainty secrets at his cheek, she kisses his feet, she leers at him from out of

her rushes: all her beds sigh out, "Come, sweet youth! Hither, hither, rosy Hylas!" Pop goes Hylas. (Surely the fable is renewed for ever and ever?) Has his captivator any pleasure? Doth she take any account of him? No more than a fisherman landing at Brighton does of one out of a hundred thousand herrings. . . . The last time Ulysses rowed by the Syrens' Bank, he and his men did not care though a whole shoal of them were singing and combing their longest locks. Young Telemachus was for jumping overboard: but the tough old crew held the silly, bawling lad. They were deaf, and could not hear his bawling nor the sea-nymphs' singing. They were dim of sight, and did not see how lovely the witches were. The stale, old, leering witches! Away with ye! I daresay you have painted your cheeks by this time; your wretched old songs are as out of fashion as Mozart, and it is all false hair you are combing!

In the last sentence you see Lector Benevolus and Scriptor Doctissimus figure as tough old Ulysses and his tough old Boatswain, who do not care a quid of tobacco for any Syren at Syrens' Point; but Harry Warrington is green Telemachus, who, be sure, was very unlike the soft youth in the good Bishop of Cambray's twaddling story. *He* does not see that the syren paints the lashes from under which she ogles him; will put by into a box when she has done the ringlets into which she would inveigle him; and if she eats him, as she proposes to do, will crunch his bones with a new set of grinders just from the dentist's, and warranted for mastication. The song is not stale to Harry Warrington, nor the voice cracked or out of tune that sings it. But—but—O, dear me, Brother Boatswain! Don't you remember how pleasant the opera was when we first heard it? *Cosi fan tutti* was its name—Mozart's music. Now, I daresay, they have other words, and other music, and other singers and fiddlers, and another great crowd in the pit. Well, well, *Cosi fan tutti* is still upon the bills, and they are going on singing it over and over and over.

Any man or woman with a pennyworth of brains, or the like precious amount of personal experience, or who has read a novel before, must, when Harry pulled out those faded vegetables just now, have gone off into a digression of his own, as the writer confesses for himself he was diverging whilst he has been writing the last brace of paragraphs. If he sees a pair of lovers whispering in a garden alley or the embrasure of a window, or a pair of glances shot across the room from Jenny to the artless Jessamy, he falls to musing on former days when, &c. &c. These things follow each other by a general law, which is not as old as the hills, to be sure, but as old as the people who walk up and down them. When, I say, a lad pulls a bunch of amputated and now decomposing greens from his breast and falls to kissing it, what is the use of saying much more? As well tell the market-gardener's name from whom the slip-rose was bought—the waterings, clippings, trimmings, manurings, the plant has undergone—as tell how Harry Warrington came by it. *Rose, elle a vécu la vie des roses,* has been trimmed, has

been watered, has been potted, has been sticked, has been cut, worn, given away, transferred to yonder boy's pocket-book and bosom, according to the laws and fate appertaining to roses.

And how came Maria to give it to Harry? And how did he come to want it and to prize it so passionately when he got the bit of rubbish? Is not one story as stale as the other? Are not they all alike? What is the use, I say, of telling them over and over? Harry values that rose because Maria has ogled him in the old way; because she has happened to meet him in the garden in the old way; because he has taken her hand in the old way; because they have whispered to one another behind the old curtain (the gaping old rag, as if everybody could not peep through it!); because, in this delicious weather, they have happened to be early risers and go into the park; because dear Goody Jenkins in the village happened to have a bad knee, and my Lady Maria went to read to her, and give her calves'-foot jelly, and because somebody, of course, must carry the basket. Whole chapters might have been written to chronicle all these circumstances, but *à quoi bon?* The incidents of life, and love-making especially, I believe to resemble each other so much, that I am surprised, gentlemen and ladies, you read novels any more. Psha! Of course that rose in young Harry's pocket-book had grown, and had budded, and had bloomed, and was now rotting, like other roses. I suppose you will want me to say that the young fool kissed it next? Of course he kissed it. What were lips made for, pray, but for smiling and simpering and (possibly) humbugging, and kissing, and opening to receive mutton-chops, cigars, and so forth? I cannot write this part of the story of our Virginians, because Harry did not dare to write it himself to anybody at home, because, if he wrote any letters to Maria (which, of course, he did, as they were in the same house, and might meet each other as much as they liked), they were destroyed; because he afterwards chose to be very silent about the story, and we can't have it from her Ladyship, who never told the truth about anything. But *cui bono?* I say again. What is the good of telling the story? My gentle reader, take your story: take mine. To-morrow it shall be Miss Fanny's, who is just walking away with her doll to the school-room and the governess (poor victim! she has a version of it in her desk): and next day it shall be Baby's, who is bawling out on the stairs for his bottle.

Maria might like to have and exercise power over the young Virginian; but she did not want that Harry should quarrel with his aunt for her sake, or that Madame de Bernstein should be angry with her. Harry was not the Lord of Virginia yet: he was only the Prince, and the Queen might marry and have other Princes, and the laws of primogeniture might not be established in Virginia, qu'en savait elle? My lord her brother and she had exchanged no words at all about the delicate business. But they understood each other, and the Earl had a way of understanding things without speaking. He knew his Maria perfectly well: in the course of a life of which not a little had been

spent in her brother's company and under his roof; Maria's disposition, ways, tricks, faults, had come to be perfectly understood by the head of the family; and she would find her little schemes checked or aided by him, as to his lordship seemed good, and without need of any words between them. Thus three days before, when she happened to be going to see that poor dear old Goody, who was ill with the sore knee in the village (and when Harry Warrington happened to be walking behind the elms on the green, too), my lord with his dogs about him, and his gardener walking after him, crossed the court, just as Lady Maria was tripping to the gate-house—and his lordship called his sister, and said: "Molly, you are going to see Goody Jenkins. You are a charitable soul, my dear. Give Gammer Jenkins this half-crown for me—unless our cousin, Warrington, has already given her money. A pleasant walk to you. Let her want for nothing." And at supper, my lord asked Mr. Warrington many questions about the poor in Virginia, and the means of maintaining them, to which the young gentleman gave the best answers he might. His lordship wished that in the old country there were no more poor people than in the new: and recommended Harry to visit the poor and people of every degree, indeed, high and low—in the country to look at the agriculture, in the city at the manufactures and municipal institutions—to which edifying advice Harry acceded with becoming modesty and few words, and Madame Bernstein nodded approval over her picquet with the chaplain. Next day, Harry was in my lord's justice-room: the next day he was out ever so long with my lord on the farm—and coming home, what does my lord do, but look in on a sick tenant? I think Lady Maria was out on that day, too, she had been reading good books to that poor dear Goody Jenkins, though I don't suppose Madame Bernstein ever thought of asking about her niece.

"CASTLEWOOD, HAMPSHIRE, ENGLAND, *August* 5, 1757.

"MY DEAR MOUNTAIN,

"At first, as I wrote, I did not like Castlewood, nor my cousins there, *very much*. Now, I am used to *their ways*, and we begin to understand each other *much better*. With my duty to my mother, tell her, I hope, that considering her ladyship's great kindness to me, Madam Esmond will be reconciled to her half-sister, the Baroness de Bernstein. The Baroness, you know, was my Grandmamma's daughter by her first husband, Lord Castlewood (only Grandpapa really was the *real* Lord); however, that was not his, that is the other Lord Castlewood's fault you know, and he was *very* kind to Grandpapa, who always spoke most kindly of him to us *as you know*.

"Madame the Baroness Bernstein first married a clergyman, Reverend Mr. Tusher, who was so *learned and good*, and such a favourite of his Majesty, as was my aunt, too, that he was made a *Bishopp*. When he died, *Our gracious King* continued his friendship to my aunt; who married a Hanoverian nobleman, who occupied a post at the Court—

and I believe left the Baroness *very rich*. My cousin, my Lord Castlewood, told me so much about her, and I am sure *I* have found from her the greatest kindness and affection.

"The (Dowiger) Countess Castlewood and my cousins Will and Lady Fanny have been described per last, that went by the Falmouth packet on the 20th ult. The ladies are not changed *since then*. Me and Cousin Will are very good friends. We have rode out a good deal. We have had some famous cocking matches at Hampton and Winton. My cousin is a *sharp blade*, but I think I have shown him that we in Virginia know a thing or two. Reverend Mr. Sampson, chaplain of the famaly, *most excellent preacher, without any biggatry*.

"The kindness of my cousin the Earl improves every day, and by next year's ship I hope my mother will send his lordship some of our best roll tobacco (for tennants) and *hamms*. He is most *charatable* to the poor. His sister, Lady Maria, *equally so*. She sits for hours reading *good books to the sick:* she is most beloved in the village."

"Nonsense!" said a lady to whom Harry submitted his precious manuscript. "Why do you flatter me, cousin?"

"You *are* beloved in the village and out of it," said Harry, with a knowing emphasis, "and I have flattered you, as you call it, a little more still, further on."

"There is a sick old woman there, whom Madam Esmond would like, a most *raligious*, good, old lady.

"Lady Maria goes very often to read to her; which, she says, gives her comfort. But though her Ladyship hath the sweetest voice, *both in speaking and singeing* (she plays the church organ, and singes there *most beautifully*), I cannot think Gammer Jenkins can have any comfort from it, being very deaf, by reason of her great age. She has her memory perfectly, however, and remembers when my honoured Grandmother Rachel Lady Castlewood lived here. She says, my Grandmother was the best woman in the whole world, gave her a cow when she was married, and cured her husband, Gaffer Jenkins, of the *collects*, which he used to have very bad. I suppose it was with the Pills and Drops which my honored Mother put up in my boxes, when I left dear Virginia. Having never been ill since, have had no use for the pills. Gumbo hath, eating and drinking a great deal too much in the Servants' Hall. The next angel to my Grandmother (N.B. I think I spelt *angel* wrong per last), Gammer Jenkins says, is Lady Maria, who sends her duty to her Aunt in Virginia, and remembers her, and my Grandpapa and Grandmamma when they were in Europe, and she was a little girl. You know they have Grandpapa's picture here, and I live in the very rooms which he had, and which are to be called mine, my Lord Castlewood says.

"Having no more to say, at present, I close with best love and duty to my honoured Mother, and with respects to Mr. Dempster, and a kiss

for Fanny, and kind remembrances to Old Gumbo, Nathan, Old and Young Dinah, and the pointer dog and Slut, and all friends, from their well-wisher

"HENRY ESMOND WARRINGTON.

"Have wrote and sent my duty to my Uncle Warrington in Norfolk. No *anser* as yet."

"I hope the spelling is right, cousin?" asked the author of the letter, from the critic to whom he showed it.

"'Tis quite well enough spelt for any person of fashion," answered Lady Maria, who did not choose to be examined too closely regarding the orthography.

"One word 'Angel,' I know, I spelt wrong in writing to my mamma, but I have learned a way of spelling it right, now."

"And how is that, sir?"

"I think 'tis by looking at you, cousin;" saying which words, Mr. Harry made her ladyship a low bow, and accompanied the bow by one of his best blushes, as if he were offering her a bow and a bouquet.

CHAPTER XIX.

CONTAINING BOTH LOVE AND LUCK.

AT the next meal, when the family party assembled, there was not a trace of displeasure in Madame de Bernstein's countenance, and her behaviour to all the company, Harry included, was perfectly kind and cordial. She praised the cook this time, declared the fricassée was excellent, and that there were no eels anywhere like those in the Castlewood moats; would not allow that the wine was corked, or hear of such extravagance as opening a fresh bottle for a useless old woman like her; gave Madam Esmond Warrington, of Virginia, as her toast, when the new wine was brought, and hoped Harry had brought away his mamma's permission to take back an English wife with him. He did not remember his grandmother; her, Madame de Bernstein's dear mother? The Baroness amused the company with numerous stories of her mother, of her beauty and goodness, of her happiness with her second husband, though the wife was so much older than Colonel Esmond. To see them together, was delightful, she had heard. Their attachment was celebrated all through the country. To talk of disparity in marriages was vain after that. My Lady Castlewood and her two children held their peace whilst Madame Bernstein prattled. Harry was enraptured, and Maria surprised. Lord Castlewood was puzzled to know what sudden freak or scheme had occasioned this prodigious amiability on the part of his aunt; but did not allow the slightest expression of solicitude or doubt to appear on his countenance, which wore every mark of the most perfect satisfaction.

The Baroness's good humour infected the whole family; not one

person at table escaped a gracious word from her. In reply to some compliment to Mr. Will, when that artless youth uttered an expression of satisfaction and surprise at his aunt's behaviour, she frankly said: "Complimentary, my dear! Of course I am. I want to make up with you for having been exceedingly rude to every body this morning. When I was a child, and my father and mother were alive, and lived here, I remember I used to adopt exactly the same behaviour. If I had been naughty in the morning, I used to try and coax my parents at night. I remember in this very room, at this very table—O, ever so many hundred years ago!—so coaxing my father, and mother, and your grandfather, Harry Warrington; and there were eels for supper, as we have had them to-night, and it was that dish of collared eels which brought the circumstance back to my mind. I had been just as wayward that day, when I was seven years old, as I am to-day, when I am seventy, and so I confess my sins, and ask to be forgiven, like a good girl."

"I absolve your ladyship!" cried the chaplain, who made one of the party.

"But your reverence does not know how cross and ill-tempered I was. I scolded my sister, Castlewood: I scolded her children, I boxed Harry Warrington's ears, and all because he would not go with me to Tunbridge Wells."

"But I will go, madam, I will ride with you with all the pleasure in life," said Mr. Warrington.

"You see, Mr. Chaplain, what good, dutiful children they all are. 'Twas I alone who was cross and peevish. O, it was cruel of me to treat them so! Maria, I ask your pardon, my dear."

"Sure, madam, you have done me no wrong!" says Maria to this humble suppliant.

"Indeed, I have, a very great wrong, child! Because I was weary of myself, I told you that your company would be wearisome to me. You offered to come with me to Tunbridge, and I rudely refused you."

"Nay, ma'am, if you were sick, and my presence annoyed you. . . "

"But it will not annoy me! You were most kind to say you would come. I do, of all things, beg, pray, entreat, implore, command that you will come."

My lord filled himself a glass, and sipped it. Most utterly unconscious did his lordship look. *This*, then, was the meaning of the previous comedy.

"Anything which can give my Aunt pleasure, I am sure, will delight me," said Maria, trying to look as happy as possible.

"You must come and stay with me, my dear, and I promise to be good and good-humoured. My dear lord, you will spare your sister to me?"

"Lady Maria Esmond is quite of age to judge for herself about such a matter," said his lordship, with a bow. "If any of us can be of use

to you, madam, you sure ought to command us." Which sentence, being interpreted, no doubt meant, "Plague take the old woman! She is taking Maria away in order to separate her from this young Virginian."

"O, Tunbridge will be delightful!" sighed Lady Maria.

"Mr. Sampson will go and see Goody Jones for you," my lord continued. Harry drew pictures with his finger on the table. What delights had he not been speculating on? What walks, what rides, what interminable conversations, what delicious shrubberies and sweet sequestered summer-houses, what poring over music-books, what moonlight, what billing and cooing, had he not imagined! Yes, the day was coming. They were all departing—my Lady Castlewood to her friends, Madame Bernstein to her waters—and he was to be left alone with his divine charmer — alone with her and unutterable rapture! The thought of the pleasure was maddening. That these people were all going away. That he was to be left to enjoy that Heaven—to sit at the feet of that angel and kiss the hem of that white robe. O Gods! 'twas too great bliss to be real! "I knew it couldn't be," thought poor Harry. "I knew something would happen to take her from me."

"But you will ride with us to Tunbridge, Nephew Warrington, and keep us from the highwaymen," said Madame de Bernstein.

Harry Warrington hoped the company did not see how red he grew. He tried to keep his voice calm and without tremor. Yes, he would ride with their ladyships, and he was sure they need fear no danger. Danger! Harry felt he would rather like danger than not. He would slay ten thousand highwaymen if they approached his mistress's coach. At least, he would ride by that coach, and now and again see her eyes at the window. He might not speak to her; but he should be near her. He should press the blessed hand at the inn at night, and feel it reposing on his as he led her to the carriage at morning. They would be two whole days going to Tunbridge, and one day or two he might stay there. Is not the poor wretch who is left for execution at Newgate thankful for even two or three days of respite?

You see, we have only indicated, we have not chosen to describe, at length, Mr. Harry Warrington's condition, or that utter depth of imbecility into which the poor young wretch was now plunged. Some boys have the complaint of love favourably and gently. Others, when they get the fever, are sick unto death with it; or, recovering, carry the marks of the malady down with them to the grave, or to remotest old age. I say, it is not fair to take down a young fellow's words when he is raging in that delirium. Suppose he is in love with a woman twice as old as himself, have we not all read of the young gentleman who committed suicide in consequence of his fatal passion for Mademoiselle Ninon de l'Enclos who turned out to be his grandmother? Suppose thou art making an ass of thyself, young Harry Warrington, of Virginia! are there not people in England who heehaw, too? Kick and abuse him,

you who have never brayed; but bear with him, all honest fellow-cardophagi; long-eared messmates, recognise a brother donkey!

"You will stay with us for a day or two at the Wells," Madame Bernstein continued. "You will see us put into our lodgings. Then you can return to Castlewood and the partridge-shooting, and all the fine things which you and my lord are to study together."

Harry bowed an acquiescence. A whole week of Heaven! Life was not altogether a blank, then.

"And as there is sure to be plenty of company at the Wells, I shall be able to present you," the lady graciously added.

"Company! ah! I shan't need company," sighed out Harry. I mean that I shall be quite contented in the company of you two ladies," he added, eagerly; and no doubt Mr. Will wondered at his cousin's taste.

As this was to be the last night of Cousin Harry's present visit to Castlewood, Cousin Will suggested that he, and his Reverence, and Warrington should meet at the quarters of the latter and make up accounts, to which process, Harry, being a considerable winner in his play transactions with the two gentlemen, had no objection. Accordingly, when the ladies retired for the night, and my lord withdrew—as his custom was—to his own apartments, the three gentlemen all found themselves assembled in Mr. Harry's little room before the punch-bowl, which was Will's usual midnight companion.

But Will's method of settling accounts was by producing a couple of fresh packs of cards, and offering to submit Harry's debt to the process of being doubled or acquitted. The poor chaplain had no more ready cash than Lord Castlewood's younger brother. Harry Warrington wanted to win the money of neither. Would he give pain to the brother of his adored Maria, or allow any one of her near kinsfolk to tax him with any want of generosity or forbearance? He was ready to give them their revenge, as the gentlemen proposed. Up to midnight he would play with them for what stakes they chose to name. And so they set to work, and the dice-box was rattled and the cards shuffled and dealt.

Very likely he did not think about the cards at all. Very likely he was thinking;—'At this moment, my beloved one is sitting with her beauteous golden locks outspread under the fingers of her maid. Happy maid! Now she is on her knees, the sainted creature, addressing prayers to that Heaven which is the abode of angels like her. Now she has sunk to rest behind her damask curtains. O bless, bless her!'

"You double us all round? I will take a card upon each of my two. Thank you, that will do—a ten—now, upon the other, a queen,—two natural vingt-et-uns, and as you doubled us you owe me so and so."

I imagine volleys of oaths from Mr. William, and brisk pattering of imprecations from his Reverence, at the young Virginian's luck. He won because he did not want to win. Fortune, that notoriously coquettish jade, came to him, because he was thinking of another

nymph, who possibly was as fickle. Will and the chaplain may have played against him, solicitous constantly to increase their stakes, and supposing that the wealthy Virginian wished to let them recover all their losings. But this was, by no means, Harry Warrington's notion. When he was at home he had taken a part in scores of such games as these (whereby we may be led to suppose that he kept many little circumstances of his life mum from his lady mother), and had learned to play and pay. And as he practised fair play towards his friends he expected it from them in return.

"The luck does seem to be with me, Cousin," he said, in reply to some more oaths and growls of Will, "and I am sure I do not want to press it; but you don't suppose I am going to be such a fool as to fling it away altogether? I have quite a heap of your promises on paper by this time. If we are to go on playing, let us have the dollars on the table, if you please; or, if not, the money—the worth of it."

"Always the way with you rich men," grumbled Will. "Never lend except on security—always win because you are rich."

"Faith, Cousin, you have been of late for ever flinging my riches into my face. I have enough for my wants and for my creditors."

"O that we could all say as much," groaned the chaplain. "How happy we, and how happy the duns would be! What have we got to play against our conqueror? There is my new gown, Mr. Warrington. Will you set me five pieces against it? I have but to preach in stuff if I lose. Stop! I have a Chrysostom, a Fox's Martyrs, a Baker's Chronicle, and a cow and her calf. What shall we set against these?"

"I will bet one of Cousin Will's notes for twenty pounds," cried Mr. Warrington, producing one of those documents.

"Or I have my brown mare, and will back her red against your honour's notes of hand, but against ready money."

"I have my horse. I will back my horse against you for fifty!" bawls out Will.

Harry took the offers of both gentlemen. In the course of ten minutes the horse and the bay mare had both changed owners. Cousin William swore more fiercely than ever. The parson dashed his wig to the ground, and emulated his pupil in the loudness of his objurgations. Mr. Harry Warrington was quite calm, and not the least elated by his triumph. They had asked him to play, and he had played. He knew he should win. O beloved slumbering angel! he thought, am I not sure of victory when *you* are kind to me? He was looking out from his window towards the casement on the opposite side of the court, which he knew to be hers. He had forgot about his victims and their groans, and ill-luck, ere they crossed the court. Under yonder brilliant flickering star, behind yonder casement where the lamp was burning faintly, was his joy, and heart, and treasure.

CHAPTER XX.

FACILIS DESCENSUS.

WHILST the good old Bishop of Cambray, in his romance lately mentioned, described the disconsolate condition of Calypso at the departure of Ulysses, I forget whether he mentioned the grief of Calypso's lady's-maid on taking leave of Odysseus's own gentleman. The menials must have wept together in the kitchen precincts whilst the master and mistress took a last wild embrace in the drawing-room; they must have hung round each other in the fore-cabin, whilst their principals broke their hearts in the grand-saloon. When the bell rang for the last time, and Ulysses's mate bawled, "Now! any one for shore!" Calypso and her female attendant must have both walked over the same plank, with beating hearts and streaming eyes; both must have waved pocket-handkerchiefs (of far different value and texture) as they stood on the quay to their friends on the departing vessel, whilst the people on the land and the crew crowding in the ship's bows shouted, Hip, hip, huzzay (or whatever may be the equivalent Greek for the salutation) to all engaged on that voyage. But the point to be remembered is, that if Calypso *ne pouvait se consoler*, Calypso's maid *ne pouvait se consoler non plus*. They had to walk the same plank of grief, and feel the same pang of separation; on their return home, they might not use pocket-handkerchiefs of the same texture and value, but the tears, no doubt, were as salt and plentiful which one shed in her marble halls, and the other poured forth in the servants' ditto.

Not only did Harry Warrington leave Castlewood a victim to love, but Gumbo quitted the same premises, a prey to the same delightful passion. His wit, accomplishments, good-humour, his skill in dancing, cookery, and music, had endeared him to the whole female domestic

circle. More than one of the men might be jealous of him, but the ladies all were with him. There was no such objection to the poor black men then in England as has obtained since among white-skinned people. Their's was a condition not perhaps of equality, but they had a sufferance and a certain grotesque sympathy from all; and from women, no doubt, a kindness much more generous. When Ledyard and Parke, in Blackmansland, were persecuted by the men, did they not find the black women pitiful and kind to them? Women are always kind towards our sex. What (mental) negroes do they not cherish? what (moral) hunchbacks do they not adore? what lepers, what idiots, what dull drivellers, what misshapen monsters (I speak figuratively) do they not fondle and cuddle? Gumbo was treated by the women as kindly as many people no better than himself: it was only the men in the servants' hall who rejoiced at the Virginian lad's departure. I should like to see him taking leave. I should like to see Molly housemaid stealing to the terrace-gardens in the grey dawning to cull a wistful posey. I should like to see Betty kitchenmaid cutting off a thick lock of her chestnut ringlets which she proposed to exchange for a woolly token from young Gumbo's pate. Of course he said he was *regum progenies*, a descendant of Ashantee kings. In Caffraria, Connaught, and other places now inhabited by hereditary bondsmen, there must have been vast numbers of these potent sovereigns in former times, to judge from their descendants now extant.

At the morning announced for Madame de Bernstein's departure, all the numerous domestics of Castlewood crowded about the doors and passages, some to have a last glimpse of her ladyship's men and the fascinating Gumbo, some to take leave of her ladyship's maid, all to waylay the Baroness and her nephew for parting-fees, which it was the custom of that day largely to distribute among household servants. One and the other gave liberal gratuities to the liveried society, to the gentlemen in black and ruffles, and to the swarm of female attendants. Castlewood was the home of the Baroness's youth, and as for her honest Harry, who had not only lived at free charges in the house, but had won horses and money—or promises of money—from his cousin and the unlucky chaplain, he was naturally of a generous turn, and felt that at this moment he ought not to stint his benevolent disposition. "My mother, I know," he thought, "will wish me to be liberal to all the retainers of the Esmond family." So he scattered about his gold pieces to right and left, and as if he had been as rich as Gumbo announced him to be. There was no one who came near him but had a share in his bounty. From the major-domo to the shoe-black, —Mr. Harry had a peace-offering for them all. To the grim housekeeper in her still-room, to the feeble old porter in his lodge he distributed some token of his remembrance. When a man is in love with one woman in a family, it is astonishing how fond he becomes of every person connected with it. He ingratiates himself with the maids; he

is bland with the butler; he interests himself about the footman; he runs on errands for the daughters; he gives advice and lends money to the young son at college; he pats little dogs which he would kick otherwise; he smiles at old stories which would make him break out in yawns, were they uttered by any one but papa; he drinks sweet port wine for which he would curse the steward and the whole committee of a club; he bears even with the cantankerous old maiden aunt; he beats time when darling little Fanny performs her piece on the piano, and smiles when wicked, lively little Bobby upsets the coffee over his shirt.

Harry Warrington, in his way, and according to the customs of that age, had for a brief time past (by which I conclude that only for a brief time had his love been declared and accepted) given to the Castlewood family all these artless testimonies of his affection for one of them. Cousin Will should have won back his money and welcome, or have won as much of Harry's own as the lad could spare. Nevertheless, the lad, though a lover, was shrewd, keen, and fond of sport and fair play, and a judge of a good horse when he saw one. Having played for and won all the money which Will had, besides a great number of Mr. Esmond's valuable autographs, Harry was very well pleased to win Will's brown horse—that very quadruped which had nearly pushed him into the water on the first evening of his arrival at Castlewood. He had seen the horse's performance often, and, in the midst of all his passion and romance, was not sorry to be possessed of such a sound, swift, well-bred hunter and roadster. When he had gazed at the stars sufficiently as they shone over his mistress's window, and put her candle to bed, he repaired to his own dormitory, and there, no doubt, thought of his Maria and his horse with youthful satisfaction, and how sweet it would be to have one pillioned on the other, and to make the tour of all the island on such an animal with such a pair of white arms round his waist. He fell asleep ruminating on these things, and meditating a million of blessings on his Maria, in whose company he was to luxuriate at least for a week more.

In the early morning poor Chaplain Sampson sent over his little black mare by the hands of his groom, footman, and gardener, who wept and bestowed a great number of kisses on the beast's white nose as he handed him over to Gumbo. Gumbo and his master were both affected by the fellow's sensibility; the negro servant showing his sympathy by weeping, and Harry by producing a couple of guineas, with which he astonished and speedily comforted the chaplain's boy. Then Gumbo and the late groom led the beast away to the stable, having commands to bring him round with Mr. William's horse after breakfast, at the hour when Madame Bernstein's carriages were ordered.

So courteous was he to his aunt, or so grateful for her departure, that the master of the house even made his appearance at the morning meal, in order to take leave of his guests. The ladies and the chaplain

were present—the only member of the family absent was Will: who, however, left a note for his cousin, in which Will stated, in exceedingly bad spelling, that he was obliged to go away to Salisbury Races that morning, but that he had left the horse which his cousin won last night, and which Tom, Mr. Will's groom, would hand over to Mr. Warrington's servant. Will's absence did not prevent the rest of the party from drinking a dish of tea amicably, and in due time the carriages rolled into the courtyard, the servants packed them with the Baroness's multiplied luggage, and the moment of departure arrived.

A large open landau contained the stout Baroness and her niece; a couple of men-servants mounting on the box before them with pistols and blunderbusses ready in event of a meeting with highwaymen. In another carriage were their ladyships' maids, and another servant in guard of the trunks, which, vast and numerous as they were, were as nothing compared to the enormous baggage-train accompanying a lady of the present time. Mr. Warrington's modest valises were placed in this second carriage under the maids' guardianship, and Mr. Gumbo proposed to ride by the window for the chief part of the journey.

My lord, with his step-mother and Lady Fanny, accompanied their kinswoman to the carriage-steps, and bade her farewell with many dutiful embraces. Her Lady Maria followed in a riding-dress, which Harry Warrington thought the most becoming costume in the world. A host of servants stood around, and begged Heaven bless her ladyship. The Baroness's departure was known in the village, and scores of the folks there stood waiting under the trees outside the gates, and huzzayed and waved their hats as the ponderous vehicles rolled away.

Gumbo was gone for Mr. Warrington's horses, as my lord, with his arm under his young guest's, paced up and down the court. "I hear you carry away some of our horses out of Castlewood?" my lord said.

Harry blushed. "A gentleman cannot refuse a fair game at the cards," he said. "I never wanted to play, nor would have played for money had not my cousin William forced me. As for the chaplain, it went to my heart to win from him, but he was as eager as my cousin."

"I know—I know! There is no blame to you, my boy. At Rome, you can't help doing as Rome does; and I am very glad that you have been able to give Will a lesson. He is mad about play—would gamble his coat off his back—and I and the family have had to pay his debts ever so many times. May I ask how much you have won of him?"

"Well, some eighteen pieces the first day or two, and his note for a hundred and twenty more, and the brown horse, sixty—that makes nigh upon two hundred. But, you know, cousin, all was fair, and it was even against my will that we played at all. Will ain't a match for me, my lord—that is the fact. Indeed he is not."

"He is a match for most people, though," said my lord. "His brown horse, I think you said?"

"Yes. His brown horse—Prince William, out of Constitution. You don't suppose I would set him sixty against his bay, my lord?"

"O, I didn't know. I saw Will riding out this morning, most likely I did not remark what horse he was on. And you won the black mare from the parson?"

"For fourteen. He will mount Gumbo very well. Why does not the rascal come round with the horses?" Harry's mind was away to lovely Maria. He longed to be trotting by her side.

"When you get to Tunbridge, Cousin Harry, you must be on the look-out against sharper players than the chaplain and Will. There is all sorts of queer company at the Wells."

"A Virginian learns pretty early to take care of himself, my lord," says Harry, with a knowing nod.

"So it seems! I recommend my sister to thee, Harry. Although she is not a baby in years, she is as innocent as one. Thou will see that she comes to no mischief?"

"I will guard her with my life, my lord!" cries Harry.

"Thou art a brave fellow. By the way, cousin, unless you are very fond of Castlewood, I would in your case not be in a great hurry to return to this lonely, tumble-down old house. I want myself to go to another place I have, and shall scarce be back here till the partridge-shooting. Go you and take charge of the women, of my sister and the Baroness, will you?"

"Indeed I will," said Harry, his heart beating with happiness at the thought.

"And I will write thee word when you shall bring my sister back to me. Here come the horses. Have you bid adieu to the countess and Lady Fanny? They are kissing their hands to you from the music-room balcony."

Harry ran up to bid these ladies a farewell. He made that ceremony very brief, for he was anxious to be off to the charmer of his heart; and came down stairs to mount his newly gotten steed, which Gumbo, himself astride on the parson's black mare, held by the rein.

There was Gumbo on the black mare, indeed, and holding another horse. But it was a bay horse, not a brown—a bay horse with broken knees—an aged, worn-out quadruped.

"What is this?" cries Harry.

"Your honour's new horse," says the groom, touching his cap.

"This brute?" exclaims the young gentleman, with one or more of those expressions then in use in England and Virginia. "Go and bring me round Prince William, Mr. William's horse, the brown horse."

"Mr. William have rode Prince William this morning away to Salisbury races. His last words was, 'Sam, saddle my bay horse, Cato, for Mr. Warrington this morning. He is Mr. Warrington's

horse now. I sold him to him last night.' And I know your honour is bountiful: you will consider the groom."

My lord could not help breaking into a laugh at these words of Sam the groom, whilst Harry, for his part, indulged in a number more of those remarks which politeness does not admit of our inserting here.

"Mr. William said he never could think of parting with the Prince under a hundred and twenty," said the groom, looking at the young man.

Lord Castlewood only laughed the more. "Will has been too much for thee, Harry Warrington."

"Too much for me, my lord! So may a fellow with loaded dice throw sixes, and be too much for me. I do not call this betting, I call it ch—"

"Mr. Warrington! Spare me bad words about my brother, if you please! Depend on it, I will take care that you are righted. Farewell. Ride quickly, or your coaches will be at Farnham before you;" and waving him an adieu, my lord entered into the house, whilst Harry and his companion rode out of the courtyard. The young Virginian was much too eager to rejoin the carriages and his charmer, to remark the glances of unutterable love and affection which Gumbo shot from his fine eyes towards a young creature in the porter's lodge.

When the youth was gone, the chaplain and my lord sate down to finish their breakfast in peace and comfort. The two ladies did not return to this meal.

"That was one of Will's confounded rascally tricks," says my lord. "If our cousin breaks Will's head, I should not wonder."

"He is used to the operation, my lord, and yet," adds the chaplain, with a grin, "when we were playing last night, the colour of the horse was not mentioned. I could not escape, having but one: and the black boy has ridden off on him. The young Virginian plays like a man, to do him justice."

"He wins because he does not care about losing. I think there can be little doubt but that he is very well to do. His mother's law-agents are my lawyers, and they write that the property is quite a principality, and grows richer every year."

"If it were a kingdom, I know whom Mr. Warrington would make queen of it," said the obsequious chaplain,

"Who can account for taste, parson?" asks his lordship, with a sneer. "All men are so. The first woman I was in love with myself was forty; and as jealous as if she had been fifteen. It runs in the family. Colonel Esmond (he in scarlet and the breastplate yonder) married my grandmother, who was almost old enough to be his. If this lad chooses to take out an elderly princess to Virginia, we must not balk him."

"'Twere a consummation devoutly to be wished!" cries the chaplain. "Had I not best go to Tunbridge Wells myself, my lord, and be on the spot, and ready to exercise my sacred function in behalf of the young couple?"

"You shall have a pair of new nags, parson, if you do," said my lord.

And with this we leave them peaceable over a pipe of tobacco after breakfast.

Harry was in such a haste to join the carriages that he almost forgot to take off his hat, and acknowledge the cheers of the Castlewood villagers: they all liked the lad whose frank, cordial ways and honest face got him a welcome in most places. Legends were still extant in Castlewood, of his grand-parents, and how his grandfather, Colonel Esmond, might have been Lord Castlewood, but would not. Old Lockwood at the gate often told of the Colonel's gallantry in Queen Anne's wars. His feats were exaggerated, the behaviour of the present family was contrasted with that of the old lord and lady: who might not have been very popular in their time, but were better folks than those now in possession. Lord Castlewood was a hard landlord: perhaps more disliked because he was known to be poor and embarrassed than because he was severe. As for Mr. Will, nobody was fond of him. The young gentleman had had many brawls and quarrels about the village, had received and given broken heads, had bills in the neighbouring towns which he could not or would not pay; had been arraigned before magistrates for tampering with village girls, and waylaid and cudgelled by injured husbands, fathers, sweethearts. A hundred years ago his character and actions might have been described at length by the painter of manners: but the Comic Muse, now-a-days, does not lift up Molly Seagrim's curtain; she only indicates the presence of some one behind it, and passes on primly, with expressions of horror, and a fan before her eyes. The village had heard how the young Virginian squire had beaten Mr. Will at riding, at jumping, at shooting, and finally, at card-playing, for everything is known; and they respected Harry all the more for this superiority. Above all, they admired him on account of the reputation of enormous wealth which Gumbo had made for his master. This fame had travelled over the whole county, and was preceding him at this moment on the boxes of Madame Bernstein's carriages, from which the valets, as they descended at the inns to bait, spread astounding reports of the young Virginian's rank and splendour. He was a prince in his own country. He had gold mines, diamond mines, furs, tobaccos, who knew what, or how much? No wonder the honest Britons cheered him and respected him for his prosperity, as the noble-hearted fellows always do. I am surprised city corporations did not address him, and offer gold boxes with the freedom of the city—he was so rich. Ah, a proud thing it is to be a Briton, and think that there is no country where prosperity is so much respected as in ours; and where success receives such constant affecting testimonials of loyalty.

So, leaving the villagers bawling, and their hats tossing in the air, Harry spurred his sorry beast, and galloped, with Gumbo behind him, until he came up with the cloud of dust in the midst of which his charmer's chariot was enveloped. Penetrating into this cloud, he found

himself at the window of the carriage. The Lady Maria had the back seat to herself; by keeping a little behind the wheels, he could have the delight of seeing her divine eyes and smiles. She held a finger to her lip. Madame Bernstein was already dozing on her cushions. Harry did not care to disturb the old lady. To look at his cousin was bliss enough for him. The landscape around him might be beautiful, but what did he heed it? All the skies and trees of summer were as nothing compared to yonder face; the hedgerow birds sang no such sweet music as her sweet monosyllables.

The Baroness's fat horses were accustomed to short journeys, easy paces, and plenty of feeding; so that, ill as Harry Warrington was mounted, he could, without much difficulty, keep pace with his elderly kinswoman. At two o'clock they baited for a couple of hours for dinner. Mr. Warrington paid the landlord generously. What price could be too great for the pleasure which he enjoyed in being near his adored Maria, and having the blissful chance of a conversation with her, scarce interrupted by the soft breathing of Madame de Bernstein, who, after a comfortable meal, indulged in an agreeable half-hour's slumber? In voices soft and low, Maria and her young gentleman talked over and over again those delicious nonsenses which people in Harry's condition never tire of hearing and uttering.

They were going to a crowded watering-place, where all sorts of beauty and fashion would be assembled; timid Maria was certain that amongst the young beauties, Harry would discover some, whose charms were far more worthy to occupy his attention, than any her homely face and figure could boast of. By all the gods, Harry vowed, that Venus herself could not tempt him from her side. It was he who for his part had occasion to fear. When the young men of fashion beheld his peerless Maria they would crowd round her car; they would cause her to forget the rough and humble American lad who knew nothing of fashion or wit, who had only a faithful heart at her service.

Maria smiles, she casts her eyes to Heaven, she vows that Harry knows nothing of the truth and fidelity of woman; it is his sex, on the contrary, which proverbially is faithless, and which delights to play with poor female hearts. A scuffle ensues; a clatter is heard among the knives and forks of the dessert; a glass tumbles over and breaks. An "O!" escapes from the innocent lips of Maria. The disturbance has been caused by the broad cuff of Mr. Warrington's coat, which has been stretched across the table to seize Lady Maria's hand, and has upset the wine-glass in so doing. Surely nothing could be more natural, or indeed necessary, than that Harry, upon hearing his sex's honour impeached, should seize upon his fair accuser's hand, and vow eternal fidelity upon those charming fingers?

What a part they play, or used to play, in love-making, those hands! How quaintly they are squeezed at that period of life! How they are pushed into conversation! what absurd vows and protests are palmed off by their aid! What good can there be in pulling and pressing

a thumb and four fingers? I fancy I see Alexis laugh, who is haply reading this page by the side of Araminta. To talk about thumbs indeed! . . . Maria looks round, for her part, to see if Madame Bernstein has been awakened by the crash of the glass; but the old lady slumbers quite calmly in her arm-chair, so her niece thinks there can be no harm in yielding to Harry's gentle pressure.

The horses are put to: Paradise is over—at least until the next occasion. When my landlord enters with the bill, Harry is standing quite at a distance from his cousin, looking from the window at the cavalcade gathering below. Madame Bernstein wakes up from her slumber, smiling and quite unconscious. With what profound care and reverential politeness Mr. Warrington hands his aunt to her carriage! how demure and simple looks Lady Maria as she follows! Away go the carriages, in the midst of a profoundly bowing landlord and waiters; of country folks gathered round the blazing inn-sign; of shopmen gazing from their homely little doors; of boys and market-folks under the colonnade of the old town-hall; of loungers along the gabled street. "It is the famous Baroness Bernstein. That is she, the old lady in the capuchin. It is the rich young American who is just come from Virginia, and is worth millions and millions. Well, sure, he might have a better horse." The cavalcade disappears, and the little town lapses into its usual quiet. The landlord goes back to his friends at the club, to tell how the great folks are going to sleep at the Bush, at Farnham, to-night.

The inn-dinner had been plentiful, and all the three guests of the inn had done justice to the good cheer. Harry had the appetite natural to his period of life. Maria and her aunt were also not indifferent to a good dinner: Madame Bernstein had had a comfortable nap after her's, which had no doubt helped her to bear all the good things of the meal—the meat pies, and the fruit pies, and the strong ale, and the heady port wine. She reclined at ease on her seat of the landau, and looked back affably, and smiled at Harry and exchanged a little talk with him as he rode by the carriage side. But what ailed the beloved being who sate with her back to the horses? Her complexion, which was exceedingly fair, was farther ornamented with a pair of red cheeks, which Harry took to be natural roses. (You see, madam, that your surmises regarding the Lady Maria's conduct with her cousin are quite wrong and uncharitable, and that the timid lad had made no such experiments as you suppose, in order to ascertain whether the roses were real or artificial. A kiss, indeed! I blush to think you should imagine that the present writer could indicate anything so shocking!) Maria's bright red cheeks, I say still, continued to blush as it seemed with a strange metallic bloom: but the rest of her face, which had used to rival the lily in whiteness, became of a jonquil colour. Her eyes stared round with a ghastly expression. Harry was alarmed at the agony depicted in the charmer's countenance; which not only exhibited pain, but was exceedingly unbecoming.

Madame Bernstein also at length remarked her niece's indisposition, and asked her if sitting backwards in the carriage made her ill, which poor Maria confessed to be the fact. On this, the elder lady was forced to make room for her niece on her own side, and, in the course of the drive to Farnham, uttered many gruff, disagreeable, sarcastic remarks to her fellow-traveller, indicating her great displeasure that Maria should be so impertinent as to be ill on the first day of a journey.

When they reached the Bush Inn at Farnham, under which name a famous inn has stood in Farnham town for these three hundred years —the dear invalid retired with her maid to her bedroom: scarcely glancing a piteous look at Harry as she retreated, and leaving the lad's mind in a strange confusion of dismay and sympathy. Those yellow, yellow cheeks, those livid wrinkled eyelids, that ghastly red—how ill his blessed Maria looked! And not only how ill, but how—away, horrible thought, unmanly suspicion! He tried to shut the idea out from his mind. He had little appetite for supper, though the jolly Baroness partook of that repast as if she had had no dinner; and certainly as if she had no sympathy with her invalid niece.

She sent her major domo to see if Lady Maria would have anything from the table. The servant brought back word that her ladyship was still very unwell, and declined any refreshment.

"I hope she intends to be well to-morrow morning," cried Madame Bernstein, rapping her little hand on the table. "I hate people to be ill in an inn, or on a journey. Will you play picquet with me, Harry?"

Harry was happy to be able to play picquet with his aunt. "That absurd Maria!" says Madame Bernstein, drinking from a great glass of negus, "she takes liberties with herself. She never had a good constitution. She is forty-one years old. All her upper teeth are false, and she can't eat with them. Thank Heaven, I have still got every tooth in my head. How clumsily you deal, child!"

"Deal clumsily, indeed!" Had a dentist been extracting Harry's own grinders at that moment, would he have been expected to mind his cards, and deal them neatly? When a man is laid on the rack at the inquisition, is it natural that he should smile and speak politely and coherently to the grave, quiet Inquisitor? Beyond that little question regarding the cards, Harry's Inquisitor did not show the smallest disturbance. Her face indicated neither surprise, nor triumph, nor cruelty. Madame Bernstein did not give one more stab to her niece that night: but she played at cards, and prattled with Harry, indulging in her favourite talk about old times, and parting from him with great cordiality and good humour. Very likely he did not heed her stories. Very likely other thoughts occupied his mind. Maria is forty-one years old, Maria has false—O, horrible, horrible! Has she a false eye? Has she false hair? Has she a wooden leg? I envy not that boy's dreams that night.

Madame Bernstein, in the morning, said she had slept as sound as a top. *She* had no remorse, that was clear. (Some folks are happy and

easy in mind when their victim is stabbed and done for.) Lady Maria made her appearance at the breakfast table, too. Her ladyship's indisposition was fortunately over: her aunt congratulated her affectionately on her good looks. She sate down to her breakfast. She looked appealingly in Harry's face. He remarked, with his usual brilliancy and originality, that he was very glad her ladyship was better. Why, at the tone of his voice, did she start, and again gaze at him with frightened eyes? There sate the Chief Inquisitor, smiling, perfectly calm, eating ham and muffins. O, poor writhing, rack-rent victim! O, stony Inquisitor! O, Baroness Bernstein! It was cruel! cruel!

Round about Farnham the hops were gloriously green in the sunshine, and the carriages drove through the richest, most beautiful country. Maria insisted upon taking her old seat. She thanked her dear aunt. It would not in the least incommode her now. She gazed, as she had done yesterday, in the face of the young knight riding by the carriage side. She looked for those answering signals which used to be lighted up in yonder two windows, and told that love was burning within. She smiled gently at him, to which token of regard he tried to answer with a sickly grin of recognition. Miserable youth! *Those* were not false teeth he saw when she smiled. He thought they were, and they tore and lacerated him.

And so the day sped on—sunshiny and brilliant overhead, but all over clouds for Harry and Maria. He saw nothing: he thought of Virginia: he remembered how he had been in love with Parson Broadbent's daughter at Jamestown, and how quickly that business had ended. He longed vaguely to be at home again. A plague on all these cold-hearted English relations! Did they not all mean to trick him? Were they not all scheming against him? Had not that confounded Will cheated him about the horse?

At this very juncture, Maria gave a scream so loud and shrill, that Madame Bernstein woke, that the coachman pulled his horses up, and the footman beside him sprang down from his box in a panic.

"Let me out! let me out!" screamed Maria. "Let me go to him! let me go to him!"

"What is it?" asked the Baroness.

It was that Will's horse had come down on his knees and nose, had sent his rider over his head, and Mr. Harry, who ought to have known better, was lying on his own face quite motionless.

Gumbo, who had been dallying with the maids of the second carriage, clattered up, and mingled his howls with Lady Maria's lamentations. Madame Bernstein descended from her landau, and came slowly up, trembling a good deal.

"He is dead—he is dead!" sobbed Maria.

"Don't be a goose, Maria!" her aunt said. "Ring at that gate some one!"

Will's horse had gathered himself up and stood perfectly quiet after his feat: but his late rider gave not the slightest sign of life.

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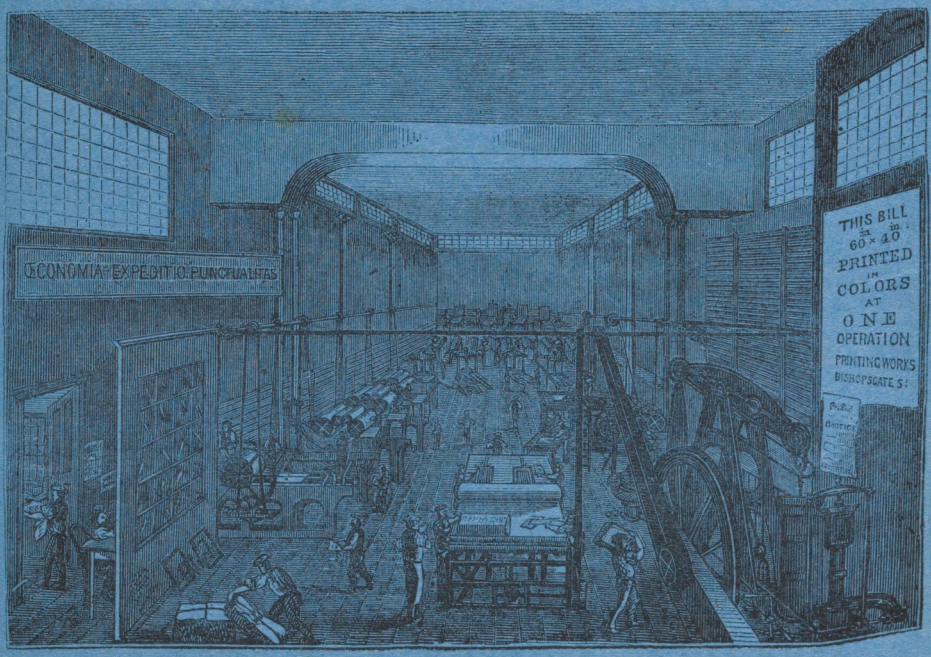

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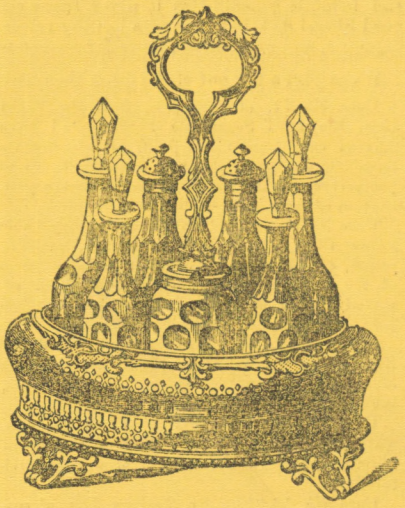

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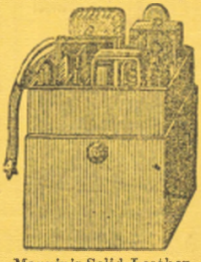

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